DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 333 322 CG 023 478

AUTHOR Barkdoll, Sharon L.
TITLE The Relationship between Life Affirming Constructs and Teachers' Coping with Job Related Stress and Job Satisfaction.
PUB DATE Mar 91
NOTE 63p.; Paper presented at the Society of Behavioral Medicine Scientific Sessions (12th, Washington, DC, March 20-23, 1991).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Coping; Elementary Secondary Education; *Job Satisfaction; Mental Health; *Self Motivation; *Stress Management; *Teachers

ABSTRACT

Research has shown that for teachers, job satisfaction is related more to intrinsic rewards than to the external conditions of their employment. However, the coping strategies for teachers' stress and recommendations for reforms in education address the teachers' external environment and offer extrinsic rewards. Positive mental health variables such as positive affect, dispositional optimism, and self-esteem have been shown to be related to intrinsic motivation, coping with unavoidable stress, and increased job involvement. Positive affect is related to extraversion, satisfaction, and subjective well-being. Individuals high in positive affect tend to form positive impressions of others and to make positive judgments about others. For individuals high in positive affect, increases in stress do not necessarily diminish feelings of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm. Dispositional optimism promotes problem focused coping and the seeking of social support, which buffers the effects of stress. Teachers high in self-esteem have high aspirations and expectations for themselves and their students. Some researchers feel that high levels of self-esteem are a basic requirement for effective teaching. Recent studies revealed that self-esteem provides an internal source that helps the individual cope with stress, and suggests that the life affirming constructs can be developed and enhanced in individuals. Sixty four references, 4 tables and 2 figures are attached. (LLL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED333322

The Relationship Between Life Affirming Constructs and Teachers' Coping With Job Related Stress and Job Satisfaction

Sharon L. Barkdoll

University of Tennessee

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG023478

Running Head: Teachers' Coping and Life Affirming Constructs

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sharon Lorraine Barkdoll

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Abstract

A recent study indicates that approximately 50% of teachers would not become teachers if they had to choose a career all over again. This fact holds true for urban and rural teachers and has been consistent over the past decade. This theoretical paper explores the relationships between teachers' job satisfaction, stress management, and intrinsic motivation. Research has shown that for teachers, job satisfaction is related more to intrinsic rewards than to the external conditions of their employment. However, the coping strategies for teachers' stress and recommendations for reforms in education address the teachers' external environment and offer extrinsic rewards. Positive mental health variables such as positive affect, dispositional optimism, and self-esteem have been shown to be related to intrinsic motivation, coping with unavoidable stress, and increased job involvement. This paper examines these three mental health variables in relation to teachers' coping with job related stressors and job satisfaction.

When they were asked whether they would enter the teaching profession if they had a chance to do it over again, up to 50% of teachers interviewed said they would not (Lombardi & Donaldson, 1987; Moracco, D'Arienzo, & Danford, 1983; Raschke, Dedrick, Strathe, & Hawkes, 1985). Various predictors indicate that teachers are translating this wishful thinking into action. For example, a 1986 Harris poll of teachers predicted that 25% of teachers will leave the profession by 1990. Even stronger evidence is supplied by a report from The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986), which increased that prediction to 50% by 1992 (Martinez, 1989). It is estimated that 15% of new teachers leave teaching after their first year, 15% after the second, and 10% leave the third year (Schlechty & Vance,1983). Most disturbing of all is the fact that about 53% of the most academically able are leaving the profession (Frank & Keith, 1984; Schlechty & Vance, 1983).

Teacher Stress

Although teaching has idealistically been viewed as a "labor of love," working in today's schools can be very costly for teachers. In a study conducted by Instructor magazine (Landsmann, 1977, 1978, 1979), over

9000 teachers reported that their major health concerns involved stress, tension, and anxiety. Further, 75% of the teachers cited stress as the reason for most of their absences during the past school year. The literature is replete with studies documenting the stress of teachers in general and special educators in particular. Studies have found little difference between "regular" and "special" educators with regard to the source of their stressors, responses to stressors, or coping resources (Beasley et al., 1983; Hudson & Meagher, 1983; Sutton & Huberty, 1984; Wheeler et al., 1982).

Sources of Teacher Stress

Popular, professional, and scholarly journals and periodicals have amply documented the sources of teacher stress. Presented in Table 1 are 17 summaries of such studies. Sutton and Huberty (1984) concluded that the sources of teacher stress may be related to the individual differences in schools and teachers. However, certain sources of stress are mentioned consistently across studies. In an extensive review of teacher burnout, Cunningham (1983) reported that the most frequently mentioned stressors were excessive time demands, work overload, lack of recognition for success in one's role, decline in public respect for teachers,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and the failure of the public to recognize the worth of what the teacher is doing monitarily. These issues continued to be the most frequently reported stressors by teachers in 1989 (Defrank & Stroup, 1989).

Insert Table 1 about here

Relationship Between Stress and Job Satisfaction

Despite the fact that the majority of teachers experience moderate to high levels of stress, they report enjoyment of their profession and satisfaction with their jobs (Fimian & Santoro, 1983). Further, satisfaction with work may serve to buffer the effects of stress for teachers (Cox & Brockley, 1984). It has been suggested that teachers who are committed to their profession expect to experience stress (DeFrank & Stroup, 1989).

There are conflicting results among studies concerning the relationship between stress and job satisfaction. An inverse relationship was found by Sutton and Huberty (1984), while no relationship was found by Holley and Kirkpatrick (1987). DeFranck and Stroup (1989) found that neither demographic variables nor teaching background is related to stress. They did find, however, that stress is a powerful predictor of

job satisfaction. High levels of stress can result in a significant decrease in job satisfaction and performance for teachers (Cunningham, 1983).

It is suggested that teachers' stress may be associated with a lack of satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of their job rather than dissatisfaction with the conditions of their employment (Defrank, 1989; Galloway, 1984; Holdaway, 1978). Intrinsic satisfaction for teachers is related to perceived control and effectiveness (Greer & Wethered, 1984). Issues likely to affect intrinsic satisfaction in teachers are the opportunity to work autonomously, independently and consistently with one's moral conscience, the opportunity to help others, feelings of accomplishment, status of teachers in the community, and the number of years of teaching experience. Issues not likely to affect intrinsic satisfaction are policies and practices of the school system, pay, and satisfaction with supervisors (Holley & Kirkpatrick, 1987). Delong (1987) reports that students entering teacher certification programs are motivated by service and that the intrinsic rewards of teaching are an important factor in career selection. Job satisfaction is related to meeting intrinsic needs (recognition, advancement, and self-actualization) and stress is

related to external factors (Cunningham, 1983; Smilansky, 1984).

The effects of intrinsic reward on turnover intentions vary with gender. Intrinsic reward was not significantly related to turnover intentions among males but was directly related to turnover intentions among females (Lackman & Diamant, 1987). Therefore, it seems that even when work stress levels are high, increased intrinsic rewards result in greater work motivation and job satisfaction in teachers. Conversely, lack of intrinsic rewards (for females) result in low motivation and job dissatisfaction.

Teachers' Strategies for Coping with Stress

Wheeler et al. (1982) found that teachers use a wide variety of responses in attempting to cope with their stress. Despite the differences in how they ranked the coping responses and the frequency of the responses, many coping responses were found to be similar. The most frequently utilized coping response was to internalize the stress--to become nervous, anxious, depressed, and irritable. Other frequent responses were talking to a colleague, close friend, or family member, participating in alternative activities, relaxing activities, physical exercise, and thinking rationally through the problem to a conclusion.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Other coping responses mentioned in the literature included praying, seeking a change in teaching assignment, returning to school to upgrade education, taking medication, ignoring the problem, complaining, getting professional counseling, yelling at students, overeating, and frequently being absent or tardy.

It is important to note that few of the coping responses utilized by teachers dealt directly with the stressor--most simply provide an opportunity to temporarily vent frustration or to avoid confronting the situation altogether. If, as suggested by Sutton and Huberty (1984), stress is more specifically related to unique personality variables, it may be that teachers cope in ways that are not quantifiable by currently utilized assessments. Sutton and Huberty do not discuss specific personality variables but do state that this would be an important area for future research.

Problems with Stress Research

The measurement of stress, job satisfaction, and coping responses of teachers are an important consideration for the present and the future. Most research conducted in this area has employed a wide variety of methods for measuring and defining teacher stress, job satisfaction, and coping responses.

Beasley (1983) in a summary of empirical research on stress and burnout, identified numerous methodological problems existing in the literature. One of the problems identified by Beasley in the research to date is the diversity of the instruments used to investigate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Many of the instruments used to assess stress in teachers have not been standardized. In Beasley's summary of 14 studies, only half of the studies reported the response rates and for those reporting, only three of the studies had response rates above 50%. Of the 14 studies only four used random sampling procedures, most used convenience sampling. Further, few of the studies investigated similar variables in relation to stress. Even when similar variables were used in different studies, different instruments for measuring the variables in relation to stress were employed in each of these studies. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are difficulties in determining the nature of the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction in teachers.

Problems with Current Recommendations

Reform movements in education may relieve some of the stressors--salaries may increase, teacher-pupil ratio

may decrease, teachers may gain more control over curriculum, and teacher preparation programs may improve. However, these reforms involve making changes in the teaching environment and providing extrinsic rewards for teachers. Given that improving the external teaching environment and providing external rewards lessens stress but does not necessarily increase job satisfaction, most attempts at reform may be missing the mark **(see figure 1).**

Place figure 1 about here

Life Affirming Constructs

When one considers the high rate of reported job dissatisfaction, the number of teachers who are leaving the profession, and the attendant costs to society in both human and financial terms, it would seem desirable to determine what individual difference variables are predictive of successful coping and sustaining high levels of job involvement and satisfaction.

The relationship between job satisfaction and stress may be explained in part by personality characteristics of the teacher. Several personality variables are related to intrinsic motivation (Matsumoto & Sanders, 1988), coping with unavoidable

stress (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986), and increased job involvement (Spencer, 1984). These personality variables, which we have termed "Life Affirming Constructs," are dispositional optimism, positive affect, and self-esteem.

Dispositional Optimism

By and large optimistic people believe that good things will happen to them rather than bad, they expect things to go their way and take immediate action to insure such an outcome. Further, this optimism seems to be relatively stable across time and in most circumstances (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimists usually seem to be optimistic in general, in that "Their positive expectations are not limited to a particular behavioral domain or class of settings" (Scheier & Carver, 1985, P. 220).

Dispositional optimism is defined in terms of generalized outcome expectancies for several reasons. Scheier and Carver (1987) found that focusing on expectancies which are specific in nature may not be feasible. It may be more practical to focus on generalized outcome expectancies beacuse the types of stressors that are encountered in daily life are usually quite general in nature and can arise from a number of causes and situations. Also, these stressors

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

may be transitory in nature; there may have been no previous experience with the stressor; or the stressor may have developed over a long period of time.

Dispositional optimism may confer a coping advantage not only when something can be done to manage the stressful event, but also when the event is something that cannot be changed and must be endured (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986). These authors concluded that optimists engage in problem-focused coping strategies when faced with threatening events. Scheier and Carver (1988) report that people who see desired outcomes as attainable continue to exert efforts to attain those outcomes even when doing so is difficult or painful.

While dispositional optimism has not been examined as a buffer against teacher stress, several studies provide support for the notion that optimism confers resistance to the effects of stress. It has also been shown to promote job involvement and satisfaction, and personal health and well-being. Dispositional optimism has been examined in a wide range of research settings as demonstrated by the seven studies presented in Table 2.

Place Table 2 about here

Relationship to stress. Carver and Gaines (1984) examined optimism associated with resistance to post-partum depression. Optimism seems to function as a psychological buffer against adverse effects of stress in that it confers resistance to the development of depressive symptoms following the delivery of a child.

Perloff (1983) investigated perceptions of vulnerability to victimization. Her review of the literature on the perceptions of victims of violent crime revealed that the psychological benefits of dispositional optimism are (among other things) a reduction in the feelings of anxiety and a relief from feeling the need to be "on guard" or hypervigilant while pursuing daily activities.

Dispositional optimism was examined as a buffer against the effects of stress experienced by students during the final four weeks of a semester. Scheier and Carver (1985) found that individual differences in generalized optimism predicted the extent to which the students reported being bothered by physical symptoms over the course of the four week period. Students who reported being highly optimistic at the beginning of the four week period were less apt to report physical symptoms than those who reported being less optimistic.

In a project to examine the underlying processes

that mediated the stress of the subjects in the studies mentioned above, Scheier, Weintraub, and Carver (1985) found that optimism was positively correlated with indications of active coping, with elaboration or complexity of coping strategies, and with seeking social support. Optimism was inversely correlated with focus on emotion and emotional expression, and with disengagement from the goal. These findings were replicated in subsequent studies conducted by Scheier et al. in 1986. The findings are further supported by studies completed by Stone and Neale (1984), who report a positive relationship between problem-directed coping and seeking social support, which is viewed as an attempt to manage a problem in an active way.

Relationship to job satisfaction. Strack, Carver, and Blaney (1989) investigated the role of dispositional optimism in predicting the successful completion of an aftercare program following treatment for alcoholism. While previous studies relied on self-report indices of subjective well-being, the results of this study were based on a very concrete and overt behavioral outcome--success or failure to complete the aftercare program. This study found that optimism (versus pessimism) was a significant predictor of the likelihood that subjects would successfully complete an

aftercare program into which they had voluntarily been admitted. The optimists were more likely to finish the program than the pessimists. It is important to note that the subject's sense of optimism was reported in general terms regarding anticipated outcomes rather than their drinking problem per se.

An examination of the relationship between optimism and job distress by Managhen and Mervis (1984) revealed that the inclination to use optimistic comparisons is linked to lower levels of job distress and reductions in stress over time.

Conclusions from research. Research evidence supports the conclusion that dispositional optimism confers resistance to the development of physical and psychological problems associated with stress. Dispositional optimism promotes "active coping"--problem focused coping and seeking social support--that buffers the effects of stress. It promotes job involvement and is inversely related to disengagement.

In an extensive review of the literature on illusion and well-being, Taylor and Brown (1988) found that an optimistic outlook may promote other criteria of mental health--the ability to care about others and the ability to engage in productive and creative work.

"Optimism may be associated with higher motivation, greater persistence, more effective performance, and ultimately, greater success" (Taylor & Brown, 1988, p. 199). This optimism may afford even greater coping assistance when an individual is the recipient of negative feedback or a similar threat.

Directions for Future Research. The findings of this review have implications concerning dispositional optimism and the role of this variable in teachers' coping with job related stress and job satisfaction.

1. Is dispositional optimism among teachers predictive of the following variables: self-reported job related stress, job satisfaction, and job attrition?
2. Is dispositional optimism among teachers significantly related to their optimism about the impact of teaching as a profession?
3. What additional variables (e.g., health habits, life style management) distinguish optimistic teachers from pessimistic teachers? When these additional variables are partialled out of the correlational analysis, how predictive is optimism of the comparison variables listed in item 1?

4. How do optimistic and pessimistic teachers differ in the way they attempt to cope with specific job-related stressors?
5. Do optimists place greater emphasis on the intrinsic satisfaction with teaching and pessimists on the extrinsic satisfaction?

Positive Affect

Over the past decade research has generated an extensive amount of information on self-reported mood as demonstrated by the 16 studies presented in Table 3.

Place Table 3 about here

Several self-report mood instruments have been developed over the years, some for clinical use and others for research purposes. "The dimensional structure of these instruments has been explored factor-analytically, and ten or so replicable mood dimensions have been identified" (Tellegen, 1985, p. 689). Watson and Tellegen (1985) conducted a review and reanalysis of nine self-report mood factor analyses from eight different studies. This review and reanalysis basically replicated the results of the previous analyses and in addition "Showed that the item intercorrelations were dominated by two large

dimensions, Positive Affect and Negative Affect" (Tellegen, 1985, p. 689).

Positive affect and negative affect are not opposites of one another as might be expected. Positive affect and negative affect scales have low or nonsignificant correlations--they are largely independent of one another (Watson & Tellegen, 1985).

Both positive and negative affect can be measured as traits or as states according to Watson (1988a). He describes a trait as a persistent difference in general affective levels and a state as a transient fluctuation in mood. Both state and trait positive affect and state and trait negative affect relate to different personality traits and to different types of variables. For example, positive affect scales correlate strongly with extraversion (Costa & McCrae 1980) and various measures of social engagement, satisfaction, and frequency of pleasant events (Clark & Watson, 1988). Negative affect is related to measures of perceived stress (Clark & Watson, 1988), physical symptoms and health complaints (Watson, 1988a) and corresponds to the personality dimension termed neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1980).

Positive affect reflects the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active, high in

environment (Watson, 1988b). High positive affect is characterized by terms such as excited, elated, enthusiastic, peppy, strong, alert, and determined. Low positive affect is characterized by terms such as drowsy, dull, sleepy, tired, depressed, lethargic, and sluggish. The high positive affect descriptors reflect pleasurable engagement; the low positive affect descriptors reflect the relative absence of pleasureable engagement or a state of disengagement (Tellegen, 1985). A person high in positive affect can continue to lead an active and interesting life even in the face of perceived stress and strain (Watson & Pennebaker, 1989; Watson, 1988a).

Relationship to stress. Watson (1988a) states that despite stress and strain, a person high in positive affect can continue to lead an active and interesting life. Studies indicate that positive and negative affect relate to different variables. Negative affect is related to perceived stress, poor coping, health complaints, and frequency of unpleasant events. These variables are not related to positive affect (Watson & Clark, 1984; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989).

Positive affect is related to frequency of pleasant events and social activities (Clark & Watson, 1988; Watson, 1988a). All major types of social

activity are associated with positive affect. Physical activities, traveling, and sightseeing are especially associated with heightened positive affect (Clark & Watson, 1988) In addition to the stress reduction benefits of these activities, teachers identified specific activities and hobbies such as sports, dance, travel, and sightseeing as being important to their professional lives. "Teachers reported feelings of enjoyment, excitement, and personal growth, first from the outside experience itself, and a second time from sharing the experience with students" (Pajak, 1989, p. 299).

Relationship to job satisfaction. It has been demonstrated that mood patterns limit the effectiveness of teachers. Morgan and Krehbiel (1985) found that teachers who resigned their positions due to job difficulties showed higher levels of tension, anger, anxiety, and depression (as measured on the Profile of Mood States) than did teachers working in the same environment who reported job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the profession. These findings suggest that certain personality characteristics may be more adaptive in teaching than are others.

In a survey investigating the impact of teachers' personal lives, including personal traits and

experiences, "Teachers ... viewed interactions with students and collegues at school as opportunities for giving expression to positive personal qualities" (Pajak, 1989, p. 292). Although positive affect hasn't been directly studied in relation to teachers, the descriptors of positive affect--active, enthusiastic, excited, elated, peppy, strong, happy, and warmhearted--are also the descriptors of teachers who report job satisfaction.

Research using factor analytic techniques has shown that positive affect and extraversion share a common dimension in combined mood-personality space (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Diener & Emmons, 1985; Meyer & Shack, 1989). According to Costa and McCrae (1980), positive affect is directly related to extraversion and contributes to a sense of well-being, life satisfaction, and global happiness.

As part of the Normative Aging Study (a longitudinal study of health and aging in men), the predictive relations between personality measures and levels of subjective well-being was examined by comparing initial results with results obtained from the same sample 10 years later. It was determined that "Knowing an individual's level of positive affect allows a prediction of how happy the person will be 10

years later" (Costa & McCrae, 1980, p. 246). A study to determine the reasons why people vary in their satisfaction with various life domains revealed that positive affect strongly predicted satisfaction across most domains (Emmons, 1983).

The published literature on the relationship between positive affect and helping behavior was examined by Carlson, Charlin, and Miller (1988). Their analysis revealed that a positive mood increases a person's helpfulness to the extent that being helpful meets the helper's positive reinforcement needs. Studies conducted by Manucia, Baumann, and Cialdini (1984) demonstrated that subjects in a positive mood exhibited helpful behavior for reasons unrelated to mood management. Helpfulness was not used to elevate positive mood but was a side effect of positive affect.

An examination of mood effects on person-perception judgments revealed that subjects in a positive mood formed more favorable impressions of others and made more positive judgements about others (Forgas & Bower, 1987). Further, individuals took more time to process mood-consistent information than mood-inconsistent information. Also, recall and recognition errors tended to be biased toward mood-consistent information.

Conclusions from research. Given the difference between positive and negative affect, it is clear that positive affect is a variable that might be predictive of teachers' successful coping and sustaining job involvement and satisfaction.

While positive affect has not been studied in relation to teachers, the terms that describe the personality characteristics of teachers who report job satisfaction are very similar to the terms that describe individuals high in positive affect. Another commonality between teachers who report job satisfaction and individuals high in positive affect is social activity. Satisfied teachers view social activity, especially active social events, as making an important contribution to their professional lives. Positive affect is highly correlated with social activity.

Positive affect is related to extraversion, satisfaction, and subjective well-being. Individuals high in positive affect tend to form positive impressions of others and to make positive judgments about others. Positive affect is associated with helping others. For individuals high in positive affect, increases in stress and strain do not necessarily diminish feelings of energy, excitement,

and enthusiasm.

Directions for future research. Despite the enormous amount of research on affect, the positive affect mood dimension has received relatively little attention, especially when compared to the amount given negative affect. Positive affect would seem to be an important dimension to study in relation to many areas of health psychology, occupation and career development, and education.

1. Does positive affect offer a predisposition for the success of some teachers ?
2. Is positive affect among teachers predictive of the following variables: self-reported job-related stress, job satisfaction, and sustained job involvement?
3. How do teachers high and low in positive affect differ in the way they attempt to cope with specific job-related stressors?
4. Do teachers who report a high level of involvement in social activities, hobbies, and physical activity also rate high in positive affect?

Self-Esteem

The construct of self-esteem has been studied and widely used since 1890, yet there is no standard theoretical or operational definition for this

construct. Crandall (1975), in an effort to clear up the ambiguities surrounding the research in the area of self-esteem, defined self-esteem simply as "Liking and respect for oneself which has some basis in reality" (p. 45). Baumeister, Tice, and Hutton (1989) describe self-esteem as "An intrapsychic structure: an attitude that evaluates the self" (p. 547).

Self-esteem has been studied in relation to many variables. For purposes of this paper, self-esteem will be discussed as it relates to coping with stress (particularly job related stress) and satisfaction (particularly job satisfaction). Crandall (1975) states, "By discovering what facets of self-esteem relate to particular criteria, our overall understanding of self-esteem is also increased" (p. 49). In the early 1980's several studies examined the relationship between self-esteem and teachers' effectiveness, coping abilities, and job satisfaction. These studies are presented in Table 4. However, a review of the literature indicates that no recent studies of this relationship have been conducted.

Place Table 4 about here

Relationship to stress. In a recent review of the literature on self-esteem, motivation, and depression of patients after a myocardial infarction, Nir and Neuman (1990) found self-esteem described as an internal source of help for coping with stress. Their review also revealed that individuals high in self-esteem were more likely to report high life satisfaction and high levels of self-respect and self-worth.

Zuckerman (1989) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and stress levels and reactions to stress. She found self-esteem levels remain steady, while stress levels and reactions to stress fluctuate over time. Therefore, it seems that stable traits like self-esteem exert an influence over fluctuating variables like stress and not vice versa.

Hubbs-Tait and Blodgett (1989) found that individuals high in self-esteem appraise their resources positively when confronted with stressful situations.

Relationship to job satisfaction. Dolce (1984) in his discussion on teacher effectiveness suggests that high self-esteem is a basic requirement for effective teaching. Before students begin to trust a teacher, they will "test" the teacher's self-esteem. "Before

they (children) actually trust you, they will call you names and make you feel like the biggest fool in the world. How you deal with this will affect your relationship with the children" (p. 155). In order to withstand this sort of personal attack, Dolce states that teachers must have good feelings about themselves otherwise they may tend to "second guess" their own behavior. A teacher with low self-esteem will be perceived as weak and ineffective by the students. While this discussion focused on teachers of emotionally disturbed students, Dolce feels it has implications for all teachers, especially in light of the numbers of special education students being mainstreamed into regular classes.

Self-esteem was found to be a major influence on job involvement of teachers. Ghosh and Deb (1983) found that teachers high in self-esteem had greater congruence between aspiration and expectation than did teachers low in self-esteem. In fact, the smaller the difference between aspiration and expectation, the higher the self-esteem. They also report that teachers with the same educational background differed in the degree of job involvement. "Self-esteem is the projection of one's ego-structure regarding job identification and involvement" (p. 55).

A model for effective education developed by Hawkins (1983) has three components--the student, the curriculum, and the teacher. An important support element of the model is the teacher's achievement of a high level of self-esteem which encourages, within the teacher, a higher degree of task/job involvement. According to Hawkins, "Once the esteem stage is achieved in Maslow's needs hierarchy, teachers can operate as self-motivated, dedicated individuals" (p. 344). Singh (1984) suggests that enhanced self-esteem in teachers can lead to improvement of classroom instruction and increased professional growth.

Morgan (1984) attempted to delineate and describe the personality traits of teachers who were most successful in fostering both the cognitive and psychosocial development of their students. She found that these teachers' feelings of self-worth were neither extremely high nor low. Those with moderate levels of feelings of self-worth were viewed as being in a better position to be empathic and thus more effective in their response to students than those teachers at the high or low end of the scale. Morgan states that teachers at the high end of the scale may have never actually experienced empathy except at the

cognitive level.

Singh (1984) and Spencer (1984) suggest that a major focus of staff development for teachers should be ways to build or enhance self-esteem. Historically, the major focus of staff development has been training or skills improvement. Research, however, shows that teachers are dissatisfied with this type of staff development and gain little from it. Singh and Spencer maintain that teachers will benefit little from staff development unless the focus is expanded to include the enhancement of personality characteristics like self-esteem. It is the development of these characteristics in teachers that will in turn lead to professional growth and improved classroom teaching.

Ghosh and Deb (1983) note that individuals high in self-esteem are motivated to perform well on a task in an effort to perpetuate their self-concept of competence. They view self-esteem as a mediator in the relationship between performance and satisfaction. "For high self-esteem persons, the better the performance the greater the balance with their self-concept of competence and therefore the more satisfaction with the task" (p. 52).

Baumeister et al. (1989) found that individuals high in self-esteem had a tendency to present

themselves in a self-enhancing manner typified by a willingness to accept risks and an ability to focus on positive qualities. Individuals high in self-esteem tend to measure their own performance with that of successful others and to accept feedback from "experts". Individuals low in self-esteem prefer to measure their own performance with their own past performances and internal standards. They are more receptive to feedback from peers than "experts".

Conclusions from research. Self-esteem has been studied in relation to teachers and their particular stress. Studies completed in the early 1980's indicated that teachers with high levels of self-esteem were also high in effectiveness, job involvement, and job satisfaction. Teachers high in self-esteem have high aspirations and expectations--for themselves and for their students. Some researchers feel that high levels of self-esteem are a basic requirement for effective teaching. They contend that programs to enhance and build self-esteem should be included in staff development.

Recent studies revealed that self-esteem provides an internal source that helps the individual cope with stress. Furthermore, individuals high in self-esteem are more likely to report high levels of life

satisfaction than are individuals low in self-esteem. Also, the higher the level of self-esteem, the higher the level of job performance. Further, studies revealed that self-esteem remains stable despite fluctuations in stress.

Directions for future research. There has been little recent research on the relationship between self-esteem and teacher's stress and job satisfaction. However, recent studies on the relationship between self-esteem and mental health (Zuckerman, 1989) and physical health (Nir & Neumann, 1990; Hubbs-Tait & Blodgett, 1989) have implications for teachers that need to be explored.

1. How do teachers high in self-esteem differ from teachers low in self-esteem in the way they attempt to cope with specific job-related stressors?
2. Do teachers with high levels of self-esteem and high levels of job-related stress report job satisfaction?
3. Are teachers with high levels of self-esteem more inclined to be actively involved in activities of the school (as an indication of job involvement) than those with low self-esteem?
4. What additional variables (e.g., health habits, life style management) distinguish teachers with high self-esteem from those with low self-esteem?

Concluding Thoughts

Studies demonstrate that life affirming constructs can predict job satisfaction for individuals as well as prepare them for successful coping with job-related stressors. Dispositional optimism has been shown to be a prospective predictor of successful coping with stress. Retrospective studies have found that optimism promotes the ability to care about others, to be happy, and to engage in productive/creative work. Positive affect has been shown to increase helpfulness and to cause individuals to view others more favorably. Positive affect strongly predicts satisfaction across most life domains. Self-esteem significantly influences job involvement and is considered basic to effective teaching. The effects of stress are moderated by high self-esteem **(see figure 2).**

Place figure 2 about here

Research suggests that the life affirming constructs--positive affect and self-esteem can be developed and enhanced in individuals. Sarason, Potter, and Sarason (1986) found that positive affect can be stimulated in individuals through activities that focus one's attention on pleasant experiences and

instances of self-efficacy. Singh (1984) suggests that peer-evaluation techniques (receiving feedback from peers, reflective teaching, and team teaching) could enhance self-esteem of teachers. These techniques specifically address the preference of individuals low in self-esteem to compare themselves primarily to their own past performances and to accept feedback from peers. Spencer (1984) states that self-esteem can be developed and enhanced through values clarification, reorganization of personal and occupational goals, networking, and counseling. While it has not been suggested that dispositional optimism can be developed or enhanced, perhaps the coping strategies employed by optimists can be taught to those individuals low in dispositional optimism.

Given that these life affirming constructs may predict successful coping and job satisfaction of teachers and may also prepare teachers for this success, and further, that these life affirming constructs can be developed or enhanced, it seems important that they be considered a part of teacher education. Carefully planned programs for preservice and inservice could be a means to develop and enhance the personal characteristics that are so necessary for successful teaching experiences.

References

Baumeister, R. F., Tice, D. M., & Hutton, D.G. (1989). Self-presentational motivations and personality differences in self-esteem. Journal of Personality, 57, 547-577.

Beasley, C. R. (1983, April). On-the-job stress and burnout: Contributing factors and environmental alternatives in educational settings. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Carlson, M., Charlin, V., & Miller, N. (1988). Positive mood and helping behavior: A test of six hypothesis. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55, 211-229.

Carver, C. S., & Gaines, J. G. (1987). Optimism, pessimism, and postpartum depression. Cognitive Therapy, 11, 449-462.

Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (1988). Mood and the mundane: Relations between daily life and events and self-reported mood. Journal of Personality and Psychology, 54, 296-308.

Cox, T., & Brockley, T. (1984). The experience and effects of stress in teachers. British Educational Research Journal, 10, 83-87.

Crandall, R. (1975). The measurement of self-esteem and

related constructs. In J. P. Robinson & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), Measures of social psychological attitudes. (pp. 45-57). Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Cunningham, W. G. (1983). Teacher burnout-solutions for the 1980's: A review of the literature. The Urban Review, 15, 37-51.

Defrank, R. S., & Stroup, C. A. (1989). Teacher stress and health: Examination of a model. Journal of Psychomatic Research, 33, 99-109.

Delong, T. J. (1987). Teachers and their careers: Why do they choose teaching? Journal of Career Development, 14, 118-125.

Diener, A., & Emmons, R. A. (1985). The independence of positive and negative affect. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47, 1105-1117.

Dolce, R. (1984). Being a teacher of the behavior disordered. Education, 105, 155-161.

Emmons, R. A. (1983). Factors predicting satisfaction judgements: A comparative examination. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

Fimian, M. J. (1985). The development of an instrument to measure occupational stress in teachers of exceptional students. Techniques: A Journal of Remedial Education and Counseling, 1, 270-285.

Fimian, M. J. (1981). Correlations of occupational stress as reported by full time special educators. Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Houston, Texas.

Fimian, M. J., & Santoro, T. M. (1983). Sources and manifestations of occupational stress as reported by full time special educational teachers. Exceptional Children, 49, 540-543.

Forgas, J. P., & Bower, G. H. (1987). Mood effects on person-perception judgements. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53, 53-60.

Frank, A. R., & Keith, T. Z. (1984). Academic abilities of persons entering and remaining in special education. Exceptional Children, 51, 76-77.

Galloway, D. (1984). Mental health, absences from work, stress, and satisfaction in a sample of New Zealand elementary school teachers. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 18, 359-363.

Ghosh, G., & Deb, S. (1983). The role of tenure of service on job involvement with reference to self-esteem. Managerial Psychology, 4, 51-5.

Greer, J. G., & Wethered, C. E. (1984). Learned helplessness: A piece of the burnout puzzle.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Exceptional Children, 50, 524-530.

Hawkins, V. (1983). Learning in the 1980's: A support model for effective education. Education, 103, 344-348.

Holdaway, E. A. (1978). Facet and overall satisfaction of teachers. Education Administration, 14, 30-47.

Holley, C. S., & Kirkpatrick, S. W. (1987). Job satisfaction and stress of home economics teachers. Home Economics Research Journal, 16, 109-119.

Hubbs-Tait, L., & Blodgett, C. J. (1989). The mediating effects of self-esteem and coronary-prone behavior on problem solving and affect under low and high stress. Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 17, 101-110.

Hudson, F., & Meagher, K. (1983). Variables associated with stress and burnout of regular and special education teachers. Lawrence, Kansas: Kansas University, Department of Special Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 239 471)

Lackman, R., and Diamont, E. (1987). Withdrawal and restraining factors in teacher's turnover intentions. Journal of Occupational Behavior, 8, 219-232.

Landsmann, L. (1979). Special report: Teacher burnout. Instructor, 88(1).

Landsmann, L. (1978). You may be hazardous to your

teachers' health. The National Elementary School Principal, 57, 24-28.

Landsmann, L. (1977). Instructor survey reveals stress, weight top concerns of teachers nationwide. Instructor, 86, 71-82.

Lombardi, T. P., & Donaldson, J. K. (1987). Rural special education teachers respond: Satisfaction with jobs and training program. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 7, 29-36.

Manucia, G. K., Baumann, D. J., & Cialdini, R. B. (1984). Mood influences on helping: Direct effects or side effects. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46, 357-364.

Martinez, J.G.R. (1989). Cooling off before burning out. Academic Therapy, 24, 271-284.

Matsumoto, D., and Sanders, M. (1988). Emotional experiences during engagement in intrinsically and extrinsically motivated tasks. Motivation and Emotion, 4, 353-369.

Menaghan, E., & Mervis, E. (1984) Coping with occupational problems: The limits of individual efforts. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 25, 406-423.

Meyer, G. J., & Shack, J. R. (1989). Structural convergence of mood and personality: Evidence for

old and new directions. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57, 691-706.

Moracco, J. C., D'Arienzo, R. V., & Danford, D. (1983). Comparison of perceived occupational stress between teachers who are contented and discontented in their career choices. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 32, 44-51.

Morgan S. R., & Krehbiel, R. (1985). The psychological condition of burned-out teachers with a non-humanistic orientation. Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 24, 59-67.

Morgan, S. R. (1984). An illustrative case of high-empathy teachers. Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 22, 143-148.

Nir, Z., & Neumann, L. (1990). Motivation patterns, self-esteem, and depression of patients after first myocardial infarction. The Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 16, 62-66.

Pajak, E., & Blase, J. J. (1989). The impact of teachers' personal lives on professional role enactment: A qualitative analysis. American Educational Research Journal, 26, 283-310.

Perloff, L. S. (1983). Perceptions of vulnerability to victimization. Journal of Social Issues, 39, 41-61.

Raschke, D. B., Dedrick, C. V., Strathe, M., & Hawkes, R. R. (1985). Teacher stress: The elementary teacher's perspective. The Elementary School Journal, 85, 559-546.

Sarason, I. G., Potter, E. H., & Sarason, B. R. (1986). Recording and recall of personal events: Effects on cognitions and behavior. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51, 347-356.

Singh, R. (1984). Peer-evaluation: A process that could enhance self-esteem and professional growth. Education, 105, 73-75.

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1988). Dispositional optimism and physical well-being: The influence of generalized outcome expectancies on health. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55, 169-210.

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1987). Dispositional optimism and physical well-being: The influence of generalized outcome expectations on health. Journal of Personality, 55, 169-210.

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1985). Optimism, coping, and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies. Health Psychology, 4, 219-247.

Scheier, M. F., Weintraub, J. K., & Carver, C. S. (1986). Coping with stress: Divergent strategies of

optimists and pessimists. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51, 1257-1264.

Schlechty, R., & Vance J. (1983). Recruitment, selection, and retention: The shape of the teaching force. The Elementary School Journal, 83, 469-487.

Smilansky, J. (1984). External and internal correlates of teachers' satisfaction and willingness to report stress. British Journal of Educational Research, 54, 84-92.

Spencer, D. A. (1984). The home and school lives of woman teachers: Implications for staff development. Elementary School Journal, 84, 299-314.

Stone, A. A., & Neale, J. M. (1984). New measures of daily coping: Development and preliminary results. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46, 892-906.

Strack, S., Carver, C. S., & Blaney, P. H. (1987). Predicting successful completion of an aftercare program following treatment for alcoholism: The role of dispositional optimism. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53, 579-584.

Sutton, G. W., & Huberty, T. (1984). An evaluation of teacher stress and job satisfaction. Education, 105, 189-192.

Tellegen, A. (1985). Structures of mood and

personality and their relevance to assessing anxiety, with an emphasis on self-report. In A. H. Tuma & J. D. Maser (Eds.), Anxiety and the anxiety disorders (pp. 681-706). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Watson, D., & Pennebaker, J. (1989). Health complaints, stress, and distress: Exploring the central role of negative affectivity. Psychological Review, 96, 234-254.

Watson, D. (1988a). Intraindividual and interindividual analyses of positive and negative affect: Their relation to health complaints, perceived stress, and daily activities. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54, 1020-1030.

Watson, D. (1988b). The vicissitudes of mood measurement: Effects of varying descriptors, time frames, and response formats on measures of positive and negative affect. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 55, 128-141.

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Cary, G. (1988). Positive and negative affectivity and their relation to anxiety and depressive disorders. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 97, 346-353.

Watson, D., & Tellegen, A. (1985). Toward a consensual structure of mood. Psychological Bulletin, 98, 219-235.

Watson D., & Clark, L. A. (1984). Negative affectivity: The disposition to experience aversive emotional states. Psychological Bulletin, 96, 465-490.

Wheeler, L. J. (1982). Stress and coping: A comparison of regular and special educators (Report No. EC192124). Texas (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 223)

Zuckerman. D. M. (1989). Stress, self-esteem, and mental health: How does gender make a difference? Sex Roles, 20, 429-444.

APPENDIX

Table 1

Teachers' Stress, Coping Resources, and Job Satisfaction

Study	Sample	Relevant Findings
Beasley, C. et al., 1983	606 RegEd. & SpEd. teachers	Both groups scored in the moderate range of burnout.
Cox, T. & Brockley, T., 1984	Reviews studies of job stress in teachers	Job satisfaction may buffer the effects of stress.
Cunningham, W., 1983	Reviews studies of job stress in teachers	Stress is due to time demands, isolation, fear, and inadequate relationships.
DeFrank, R., & Stroup, C., 1989	245 RegEd. & SpEd. teachers	Stressors reported most often are work overload and student issues. Least reported are problems with coworkers and administrators.

Note: RegEd. and SpEd. are abbreviations for Regular Education and Special Education

(table continues)

		Committed teachers expect stress. Stress found to be a predictor of job satisfaction.
Delong, T., 1983	139 teachers	Students in teacher certification programs are motivated by service. Intrinsic rewards are important for job satisfaction in teachers.
Fimian, M. & Santoro, T., 1981	365 SpEd. teachers	Most teachers report moderate levels of stress but still express enjoyment and job satisfaction.
Frank, A. & Keith, T., 1984	6 graduating classes of SpEd. teachers between 1975-76 & 1980-81	Academically able students select SpEd. but only 47% remain in teaching as opposed to 71%

(table continues)

		of those with low academic ability.
Galloway, D. et al., 1984	296 teachers	Teachers' stress is related to lack of intrinsic reward and not to job conditions.
Holley C. & Kirkpatrick, S., 1987	100 home economics teachers	No relation found between job satisfaction and stress.
Hudson, F. & Meager, K., 1983	200 RegEd. & SpEd. teachers	No difference found between RegEd. and SpEd. teachers in factors related to perceived stress.
Lachman, R. & Diamant, E., 1987	383 vocational teachers (144 male & 239 female)	Intrinsic rewards directly related to turnover intentions in females only.
Lombardi, T. & Donaldson, J., 1987	54 SpEd. student teachers	88% report SpEd. as a personally satisfying career; however, 48% would

(table continues)

		choose another if given the chance.
Morocco, J. et al., 1983	691 teachers	52% would not choose teaching if they could choose a career over again.
Raschke, D. et al., 1985	300 teachers	Teacher stress is not a temporary condition, but a profound problem.
Smilansky, J., 1984	36 elementary teachers	Job satisfaction is related to internal factors and stress to external factors.
Sutton, G. & Huberty, J., 1984	SpEd. & RegEd. teachers	No difference found in sources of stress or in coping resources. An inverse relationship exists between stress levels and job satisfaction.
Wheeler, L.	185 RegEd. &	Results show little

(table continues)

et al., 1982	225 SpEd. teachers	difference between groups in response to stress and coping resources.

Table 2

Dispositional Optimism (DO)

Study	Sample	Relevant Findings
Carver, C. & Gaines, J., 1987	75 women in 3rd trimester of pregnancy	DO confers resistance to the development of depressive symptoms.
Scheier, M. et al., 1989	51 male coronary artery bypass surgery	DO correlates positively with problem-focused coping and negatively with denial. DO also shown to predict quality of life.
Scheier, M. & Carver, C., 1987	review of research linking DO & positive health outcomes	DO and physical well-being are positively associated.
Scheier, M.	Study 1:	DO associated with

(table continues)

et al., 1986	181 female & 110 male undergrads	problem-focused coping when the situation is controllable and with acceptance when the situation is uncontrollable.
	Study 2: 34 female & 66 male undergrads	DO correlates inversely with denial, focusing on and expressing feelings, and disengagement.
Scheier, M. & Carver, C., 1985	438 female & 336 male undergrads	Those who report being highly optimistic are less likely to report being bothered by physical symptoms.
Strack, S. et al., 1987	54 male alcoholics in	DO positively associated with successful

(table continues)

	treatment	outcome.
Taylor, S. & Brown, J., 1988	Review of research examining illusion and well-being	Suggests that overly positive self-evaluation promotes the ability to care for others, to be happy, and to engage in creative and productive work.

Table 3

Positve Affect (PA)

Study	Sample	Relevant Findings
Baumgardiner, A. & Arkin, R., 1988	115 undergrads	PA is enhanced when success is attributed to ability.
Carlson, M. et al., 1988	Review of studies on mood & helping behavior	A good mood will increase a person's helpfullness.
Clark, L. & Watson, D., 1988	18 Japanese college students	High PA is associated with social activity.
Costa, P. & McCrae, R., 1980	Study 1: 1,100 males	PA scales correlate with extraversion. PA also demonstrated the ability to predict future happiness.
	Study 2:	PA is correlated

(table continues)

	subset of group 1	with social activity.
Diener, E. & Emmons A., 1985	Study 1: 167 undergrads Study 2: 63 undergrads Study 3: 26 undergrads Study 4: 42 undergrads Study 5: 34 adult volunteers	Studies demonstrate the importance of studying mood within individuals over an extended time period. Positive and negative affect are unlikely to occur within the same person at the same moment.
Diener, E. et al., 1985	Study 1 26 undergrads Study 2 42 undergrads Study 3 34 volunteers	Studies show that emotional intensity may help to explain the independence of positive and negative affect.
Emmons, R. et al., 1983	149 undergrads	PA shown to predict satisfaction across most life domains.

(table continues)

Forgas, J. & Bower, G., 1987	52 undergrads	Those high in PA tend to form positive opinions and to make positive judgements.
Mayer, G. & Shack, J., 1989	231 undergrads	Results suggest a relationship between PA and extraversion.
Sarason, I. et al., 1986	100 undergrads & 361 Cadets	Recalling events that stimulated PA increases coping effectiveness.
Watson, D., 1988a	34 male & 46 female students	Increases in stress and pressure don't necessarily lessen feelings of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm. PA is related to social engagement.
Watson, D., 1988b	Study 1 n = 1,748	Studies show that correlations

(table continues)

	Study 2 n = 1,020 Study 3 n = 1,835	between PA and NA are unaffected across different time periods.
Watson, D. et al., 1988	90 inpatient probands & 60 cotwins	PA consistently demonstrates an inverse relationship with symptoms and diagnosis of depression.
Watson, D. & Tellegen, A., 1985	Analysis of 8 studies	Mood is characterized by two dimensions, PA and NA. This is consistent across studies.

Table 4

Self-Esteem (SE)

Study	Sample	Relevant Findings
Baumeister, R. et al., 1989	Analysis of scales for measuring SE	High SE scores are related to the tendency to present oneself in a self-enhancing manner.
Dolce, R., 1984	Principles of teaching	SE listed as a vital quality for SpEd. teachers.
Ghosh, G. & Deb, S., 1983	120 teachers	SE and tenure significantly influence job involvement.
Hawkins, V., 1983	Model for effective education	Effective education is the result of teacher SE and self-motivation.
Hubbs-Tait, L. & Blodgett, C., 1989	32 Type A & 32 Type B males	Low SE Type A's under high stress became more

(table continues)

		hostile, perceived themselves as more tense and hurried, and made more errors than high SE Type A's under stress.
Spencer, D., 1984	50 teachers	Suggestions for staff development including building and enhancing SE as a means of increasing effectiveness.
Zuckerman, D., 1989	804 female & 127 male students	Stable traits like SE influence fluctuating variables like stress rather than vice versa.

Figure 1 - What is Known - from the Literature

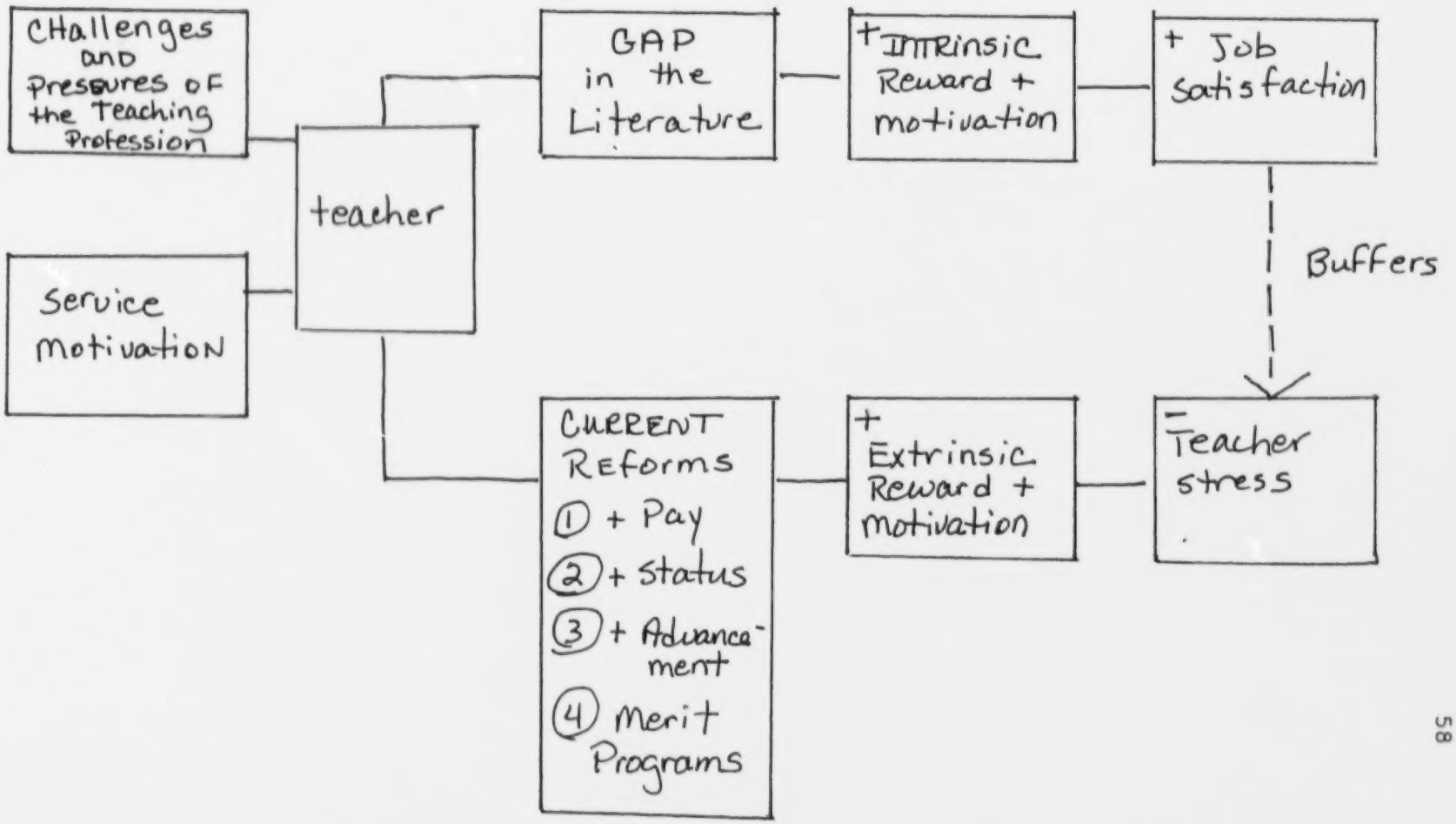

Figure 2

LIFE AFFIRMING CONSTRUCTS

JOB SATISFACTION		COPING
	DISPOSITIONAL OPTIMISM	
• Promotes successful outcomes • Promotes productive and creative work • Predicts quality of life		• Promotes problem focused coping when the situation is controllable and acceptance when it is not • Confers resistance to depressive symptoms
	POSITIVE AFFECT	
• Increases helpfulness		• Associated with physical activity • Associated with social activity and extraversion
	SELF ESTEEM	
• Promotes job involvement • Promotes job effectiveness		• Confers resistance to depressive symptoms